NICCOLÒ PEROTTI'S TRANSLATION OF THE ENCHIRIDION

BY
REVILO PENDLETON OLIVER
A.B., University of Illinois, 1933
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AN ABSTRACT OF A THESIS
SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN CLASSICS
IN THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF THE UNIVERSITY
OF ILLINOIS, 1940

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The *Enchiridium* is one of the earlier of Niccolò Perotti's translations; chronologically it stands fourth among those of which we have record. Perotti had submitted to the Pope, in 1449, versions of St. Basil's *De invidia* and Plutarch's *De invidia et odio* which, in his preface to the latter, he designated as the first fruits of his studies.[1] These he followed with another moral essay from Plutarch, the *De Alexandri Magni fortuna.* These apparently so favourably impressed Nicholas V, that Perotti was commissioned to translate some work by Simplicius,[2] but, if we are to accept without reservation his reiterated excuses, the defectuosity of the only manuscript to which he had access prevented him from bringing his task to completion. We may suppose that it was to mitigate the suspicions concerning his ability and industry which his failure to execute the commission might arouse in the Pope's mind that Perotti decided to translate the manual of Epictetus.[3] The precise date at which Perotti began work cannot be determined, but on the thirtieth of November, 1450, writing to Tortelli, the friend who seems to have acted as intermediary between him and Nicholas V, he says: "Epictetum . . . si tibi videatur, mittere possum iam tersum limatumque ad Summum Pontificem."[4] Since the same letter alludes to a severe illness from which he had only recently recovered, it would seem that much of the translation must have been completed before he fell ill in June, 1450. If Tortelli, in reply to the request for advice implied by Perotti's phrase "si tibi videatur," did not counsel delay, Perotti must have been guilty of some exaggeration in describing his work as complete, for it is improbable that either the dilatoriness of scribes, of which he elsewhere complains, or the slowness of communications, can entirely account for the fact that it was not

1. "Haec tibi, Summe Pontifex, veluti primitias quasdam et quasi libamenta meorum studiorum obtuli." The preface was published by Wilmanns and Bertalot in *Archivum Romanicum,* VII (1923), p. 507; cf. G. Mercati, *Per la chronologia della vita e degli scritti di Niccolò Perotti,* Roma, 1925, p. 35, n. 1.

2. Available evidence does not enable us to determine which of the various works by Simplicius this was.

3. He clearly implies that this was the motive which later led him to begin the translation of Polybius; see his letter of February 27, 1452, published by Cessi, in the *Giornale storico della letteratura italiana,* LX (1912), pp. 77 ff; cf. Mercati *op. cit.,* p. 33, n.2.

4. Edited by Cessi, in the *Giornale storico,* pp. 73 ff.; cf. Mercati, *op. cit.,* p. 37, n.2.

until the last days of June, 1451,[5] that Perotti finally sent his translation of Epictetus to Tortelli, who presumably presented it to the Pope soon thereafter.

In January of 1452, Perotti delivered in the name of the *civitas* of Bologna a eulogistic oration[6] of welcome to the Emperor Frederick III, who was travelling to Rome for the ceremonies of marriage and coronation; his eloquence was rewarded with the title of poet laureate.[7] Towards the end of the same year he translated Plutarch's essay *De fortuna Romanorum.*[8]

So far as the researches of the present writer have enabled him to ascertain, there are extant and preserved in European libraries at least twelve manuscripts which contain the text of Perotti's version of the *Enchiridium.* With one exception,[9] all are manuscripts of the Fifteenth Century, but causes arising from the present Peloponnesian War have rendered it impossible to consult five of these.[10] The remaining six manuscripts have been collated. In all of these, Perotti's *Enchiridium* consists of three parts: a prooemium, a translation of Simplicius's preface to his commentary on the *Enchiridium,* and a translation of the *Enchiridium* itself. All six manuscripts either contain, or give evidence of having been copied from manuscripts which contained at the termination of Perotti's preface a subscription in which he is styled *poëta laureatus.* All the manuscripts must therefore be traced to an original executed after Perotti received that title in January, 1452; none can be derived from the copy which Perotti sent to Pope Nicholas V in 1451, and we cannot, therefore, be certain that he did not in the interval revise his translation.

The following tradition is suggested as the minimum which will

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5. His letter is published by Cessi in the *Giornale storico,* pp. 75 ff.

6. Included by Albrecht von Eyb in his *Margarita poëtica,* an anthology of models of Latin prose and verse. The various editions of this work are listed in Hain's index of incunabula, nos. 6814 to 6825.

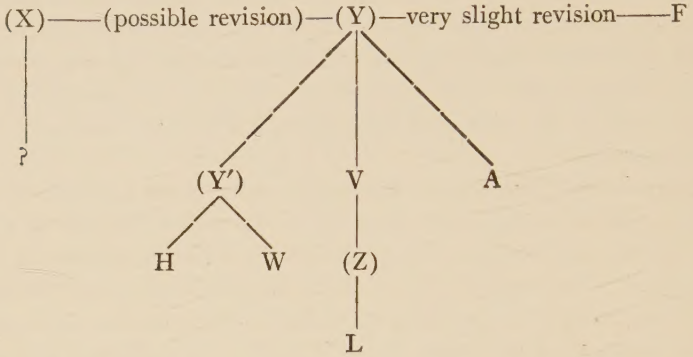
7. Cf. Perotti's supposedly schediastic verses, "Cinxisti viridi, Caesar, mea tempora lauro," which were published by Von Eyb, *op. cit.,* by Ughelli in his *Italica sacra,* Romae, 1644-62, Vol. VII, p. 857, and by Iannelli in his *Codex Perottinus,* Neapoli, 1809, p. 253.

8. The preface to this work was published by R. Sabbadini, *Giornale storico,* L (1907), p. 53.

9. Vat. Lat. 6526, executed in the Seventeenth Century at the behest of Torquato Perotti, Bishop of Amelia, who intended to illustrate the name of his family by publishing the minor works of Niccolò, the most distinguished bearer of the name.

10. Barber. Lat. 49; Florent., R. bibl. naz. cent. II. vii. 125; Angel. 1371 (=T.5.9); Vindobon. phil. Lat. 305; Pragen. 1648 (= VIII.H.30).

satisfactorily account for the peculiarities of the six manuscripts which were collated. Manuscripts whose existence is assumed by the hypothesis are designated by letters enclosed in parentheses.



X is the manuscript of Perotti's translation of the *Enchiridium* sent by him to the Pope in June, 1451. There is no evidence to indicate the probable degree of difference between its text and that of later manuscripts.

Y was written later than January, 1452; it probably contained both the *Enchiridium* and the *De fortuna Romanorum;* in the subscription to the prefaces Perotti was styled *poëta laureatus;* the text was accompanied by marginal notes. This manuscript probably remained in the possession of Perotti.

Y′ is a manuscript whose existence is assumed to account for the coincidence of a few peculiarities in H and W, neither of which can have been derived from the other.

H = Harl. 4923 (British Museum), a bulky anthology which begins with "Malchi Monachi Vita"; it includes among its varied contents the *Enchiridium* and three earlier translations by Perotti. The text, written in a clear Humanist hand with many compendia, is second only to that of F in accuracy.

W = Vat. Lat. 6847. This manuscript contains the *Enchiridium* and the *De fortuna Romanorum;* a few letters and epigrams by Perotti are found on the first six folios, but these are written in a hand quite different from the irregular and hurried writing of the principal part of the manuscript.

V= Vat. Lat. 3027, which contains the *Enchiridium,* the *De fortuna Romanorum,* two treatises on metrics and other works by Perotti, and two works which bear the name of Priscianus. The manuscript contains a copy of a letter *De ratione studiorum suorum* which Perotti wrote to his friend Costanzi probably in January, 1454; since the armorial device of the owner of the manuscript, Giovanni Jouffroy, is surmounted by an episcopal mitre, this manuscript must have been copied before Jouffroy became Cardinal of Arras in December 1461.

Z is a manuscript whose existence is assumed to account for certain peculiarities in L which seem to have been present in the manuscript from which the latter was copied but are not present in V, from which, as numerous lacunae and other peculiarities indicate, L must be derived.

L = Laurent. XLVIII.xxxvi. This is a copy of the *Enchiridium,* probably executed by a professional scribe at the behest of the Ioannes Franciscus Martius who, as the colophon indicates, presented it to Petrus Rodulfius. The scribe made one or two happy corrections, but for the most part he not only transmitted but multiplied the defects of the text.

A = Ambros. L.27, which consists of the *Enchiridium* and the *De fortuna Romanorum.* A notation on the inside of the front cover, apparently written in 1603, gives the date of the manuscript as 1473.

F = Sandaniele del Friuli, Biblioteca Comunale, 204. This manuscript, a calligraphic *livre de luxe,* consists of the *Enchiridium* and the *De fortuna Romanorum.* Perotti's coat of arms indicates that it was prepared for his library, but the handwriting is probably not his own; since the armorial device is a simple escutcheon without the quartering authorized by an imperial patent issued in June 1460, the manuscript was probably copied before this date. The text is by far the most accurate; it also shows a slight revision by the author, the substitution of the word *aegritudines* for *aegrotationes* in keeping with the distinction between the two words drawn by Cicero in the *Disputationes Tusculanae,* III, x, 23.

VITA

The present writer was born near Corpus Christi, Texas, on the seventh of July, 1910. He did not attend a grammar school. After four years spent in attending teas, classes, and amateur dramatics at high schools in Illinois and California, he entered Pomona College, now one of the Claremont Colleges, in the autumn of 1927. Here it was his good fortune to receive instruction from Professors Charles A. Fitts and Bruce McCulley. His later years as an undergraduate were spent at the University of Illinois, with some interruptions *ne Ceres deficeret.* He was particularly indebted to Professors Matthew T. McClure and Paul Jacob. He was graduated from the College of Liberal Arts with High Honours in English in February, 1933. In the Graduate School of the University of Illinois he pursued studies in Romance Languages and Classics. He remembers with pleasure and gratitude the formation in Humanistic disciplines which, in the former field, he received from Professors John Van Horne and Régis Michaud; in the latter field he is deeply indebted, both for instruction and inspiration, to Professors W. A. Oldfather, H. V. Canter, and B. E. Perry.

He has taught at the University of Illinois, as a Fellow in Romance Languages in 1933-34, as a Fellow in the Classics in 1936-37, and as an Assistant in the Classics from 1937 to the present time.

He has published articles in various periodicals of general circulation and erudite journals, and one book, a translation of a Sanskrit drama entitled *The Little Clay Cart.* The latter was published in the Illinois Studies in Language and Literature in 1938.

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